



Curriculum Statement

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1. Introduction

A curriculum is an agreed framework of activities through which knowledge is gained, skills are developed, and experience is widened.

Under Education law, each school is required to draw up its own curriculum statement. In doing so, the school must take formal notice of the guidance offered by the local education authority.

A school's curriculum statement must incorporate the requirements of the National Curriculum, and other current legislation. (The Governors' Guide to the Law offers advice on this matter.) Local Education Authorities have procedures for dealing with complaints about curriculum provision. It is the duty of the headteacher to ensure that the school's curriculum practice matches the detail of its statement.

This document sets out the curriculum statement agreed by Devon County Council. Governing bodies are invited to adopt or adapt this statement as they wish.

2. Aims

The curriculum should help all pupils to achieve the following aims:

- (a) to develop lively, enquiring minds, together with a willingness to ask questions and to argue rationally;
- (b) to think and to act creatively and with imagination;
- (c) to gain knowledge, skills and understanding appropriate to a fast-changing world, so they may be self-reliant and adaptable, and able to take an active role in society;
- (d) to acquire in particular the enabling skills of literacy and numeracy;
- (e) to grow in confidence and independence, and to know the value of co-operation;
- (f) to understand the feelings of others, to respect their values, and to consider thoughtfully their own attitudes, values and beliefs;
- (g) to achieve their true potential, and to take pride in that achievement, while taking pleasure in the achievement of others.

3. Principles

3.1 A balanced curriculum

A good curriculum is balanced and wide-ranging. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum, and acknowledges the relationship between them. This range and balance cannot be achieved, however, through the subject curriculum alone.

- (a) *Cross-curricular themes identified within the National Curriculum include citizenship, economic awareness, career guidance, health education, and environmental education.*
- (b) *Extra-curricular activities which enrich or extend the curriculum include sporting, musical and dramatic clubs and events, trips, exchanges, festivals, activity weeks, and community programmes.*
- (c) *In some circumstances, the provision of a full range of curriculum resources, including subject-teaching, may depend upon collaboration between neighbouring schools.*

3.2 Matching the needs of individuals

We are not all the same, and the different learning needs of individuals are central to the planning and implementation of a school's curriculum. At the same time, all pupils have equal rights of access to each curriculum area, and this right is irrespective of physical or academic ability, or gender, or ethnic or cultural origins.

- (a) *The principle of matching the challenge of the curriculum to the needs of individuals is fundamental to effective education.*
- (b) *Many learners need special help at some point in their education, and all pupils need to feel valued for their achievements, at whatever level.*
- (c) *Every school needs to monitor carefully the effectiveness of its policies and practices with regard to equal opportunities.*

3.3 Flexible in approach

The different demands of each curriculum area, and the varied learning needs of individuals, require a corresponding flexibility of teaching methods and forms of organisation. Within this pattern, collaboration and independence are equally valued. Above all, pupils need to involve themselves actively in the process of their own learning.

- (a) *Pupils need experience of working in a variety of group of different sizes, which have been brought together for a variety of reasons. Perceived ability is one, but only one, of these reasons.*
- (b) *They also need to develop a capacity for independent study, including research skills.*
- (c) *Within and across each curriculum area, pupils need opportunities to explore and to discover; to frame questions and to solve problems; to discuss and to debate; to enact, to create, to communicate and to evaluate, using a variety of media.*

3.4 Continuous across stages

The curriculum should be so arranged that individual progress is continuous both within and across the Key Stages, and so that practices are consistent. The experience gathered in one phase or area of the curriculum can then be built upon in the next.

- (a) In Devon, the role of cross-phase Academic Councils is valuable in developing induction programmes, and ensuring both continuity and progression across Key Stages.
- (b) The recording of achievement is an important aid to continuity within and between educational establishments.

- (c) Whole-school policies are needed to ensure consistency of practice in areas like literacy and numeracy, and to support the progress of individuals through the curriculum as a whole.

3.5 Realising potential

Accurate assessment is the key to individual progress. In order to set appropriate challenges, a teacher must be able to make informed judgements about a pupil's potential, based on clear understanding of what that pupil already knows and can do. It is particularly important that pupils themselves reflect upon their successes and their difficulties.

- (a) *Assessment through marking, discussion and self-evaluation is an integral part of the learning process.*
- (b) *An Assessment Policy will help to bring about consistency of practice across a school.*
- (c) *Properly constructed tests contribute to the assessment of pupils' learning needs.*
- (d) *National Curriculum Assessments are but summaries of this continuous process.*
- (e) *Regular reports to parents should communicate the school's developing awareness of each pupil's achievement and potential.*

3.6 Developing the whole person

The quality of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural education depends upon the quality of the relationships between teachers and pupils, and among pupils themselves. Sensitive issues should be considered in a balanced and responsible manner, and in an atmosphere of open-mindedness and mutual respect.

- (a) *Governors are required to agree a specific policy for sex education, and a code of conduct governing behaviour and discipline.*
- (b) *Religious education in County schools must follow a syllabus agreed by representatives of the faith communities of Devon.*
- (c) *The life of a school is enriched by cultural variety. Even in a largely mono-cultural county such as Devon, the different cultures represented within the population of any one school are a communal resource of significant curriculum value.*

3.7 Within the wider community

A good school relates to and makes use of the wider community of which it is a part. Opportunities are taken to reach out into that community, and to encourage the regular involvement of groups and individuals in relating the curriculum to other aspects of pupils' lives, and broadening their social experience.

- (a) *Education begins in the home, and the partnership between home and school is essential to effective education.*
- (b) *We value the cooperation of local agencies, sports clubs, arts organisations, employers, pre-school groups, and other community groups.*
- (c) *For older pupils, work experience contributes valuably to a broad and outward-looking education.*
- (d) *It is Devon's policy to promote life-long learning opportunities for education. Learners of all ages benefit from working together.*

4. Conclusion

The high quality of education in Devon reflects the dedication and commitment of all those involved in the strong partnership of school, county and community. The unparalleled changes of recent years have brought challenges to which the response has been both positive and effective, in schools where success, enjoyment and a sense of achievement are the continuing hallmarks of good practice.

5. Document History

v2	Approved by Curriculum Committee (1st May 2008)
v0.1	Reformatted to School Policy template (22 nd April 2008)
v1	Devon Education Curriculum Statement